

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 has been amended, as shown below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claim 1 (currently amended): An apparatus for manufacturing a plasma display panel having an inside and comprising a joining chamber that forms a plasma display panel by joining a front substrate and a rear substrate by heating a low-melting-point glass and a gas introduction and sealing chamber which introduces a luminescent gas into said plasma display panel which is formed by said joining chamber via a gas introduction port provided in said front substrate or said rear substrate, and seals said gas introduction port, said manufacturing apparatus further comprising:

a first mechanism for supplying a cover member formed by a metal sheet to which low-melting-point glass is applied to a first location within said gas introduction and sealing chamber,

a second mechanism provided in said gas introduction and sealing chamber for moving said cover member from said first location to a second location which is over a heating apparatus,

a third mechanism provided in said gas introduction and sealing chamber for performing vacuum exhausting the inside of said plasma display panel and introducing a luminescent gas into said plasma display panel, and

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a fourth mechanism provided in said gas introduction and sealing chamber for heating said metal sheet to which said low-melting-point glass is applied by using said heating apparatus, so that said gas introduction port is sealed by said low-melting-point glass,

wherein said third mechanism in said gas introduction and sealing chamber is adapted to perform vacuum exhausting, at least, before said fourth mechanism in said gas introduction and sealing chamber is used to melt said low-melting-point glass.

Claim 2 (original): An apparatus for manufacturing a plasma display panel according to claim 1, wherein a first member movable up and down disposed within said gas introduction and sealing chamber, and a second member movable up and down which is surrounded by said first member are provided, said fourth mechanism is provided on said second member, and said third mechanism is provided in said first member.

Claim 3 (original): An apparatus for manufacturing a plasma display panel according to claim 1, wherein a plasma display panel in which said front substrate is fixed to said rear substrate is placed within said joining chamber, and said joining chamber is vacuum- exhausted and said front substrate and said rear substrate are joined by said low-melting-point glass.

Claim 4 (original): An apparatus for manufacturing a plasma display panel according to claim 1, wherein said joining chamber and said gas introduction and sealing chamber are a single chamber.

Claim 5 (original): An apparatus for manufacturing a plasma display panel according to claim 1, wherein a luminescent gas introduction system and a gas exhaust system are provided in said gas introduction and sealing chamber, and said luminescent gas introduction

system and said gas exhaust system are communicating with the gas introduction/exhaust path provided inside said second member.

Claim 6 (original): An apparatus for manufacturing a plasma display panel according to claim 5, wherein one end of said second member is brought into intimate contact with said plasma display panel.

Claim 7 (previously amended): A method for manufacturing a plasma display panel having an inside and formed by heating a low-melting-point glass so as to join a front substrate to a rear substrate, after which a luminescent gas is introduced into said plasma display panel via a gas introduction port provided in either said front substrate or said rear substrate, after which said gas introduction port is sealed, said method comprising:

a first step of fixing said front substrate of said plasma display panel to said rear substrates, placing said substrates into a joining chamber, and then performing vacuum exhausting an inside of said joining chamber,

a second step of heating a sealing glass provided on said front substrate or said rear substrate, so as to join said front substrate to said rear substrate,

a third step of placing said joined plasma display panel in a gas introduction and sealing chamber which has been vacuum-exhausted, and then vacuum exhausting the inside of said plasma display panel,

a fourth step of making an inside of said gas introduction and sealing chamber at atmospheric pressure,

a fifth step of introducing said luminescent gas into said plasma display panel which has been vacuum-exhausted, and

a sixth step of sealing said gas introduction port of said plasma display panel.

Claim 8 (original): A method for manufacturing a plasma display panel according to claim 7, wherein said sixth step comprising:

a step of supplying a cover member formed by a metal sheet to which a low-melting-point glass is applied to a first location within said gas introduction and sealing chamber,

a step of moving said cover member to a second location which is over a heating apparatus provided within said gas introduction and sealing chamber, and

a step of pressing said metal sheet to which is applied a low-melting-point glass on said heating apparatus against said gas introduction port and sealing said gas introduction port.

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